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ABSTRACT

This recommendation concerning the Code of Sports Ethics was adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in order to favorably influence the attitudes of athletes and the general public toward sport and to provide men and women in sports with a system of values that would enable them to make responsible choices when facing societal pressures. The recommendation is for member states to give their full support to the Code of Sports Ethics, disseminate the Code, and encourage the use of the Code. The text of the Code of Sports Ethics, which is provided, includes: its aims; a definition of fair play; and responsibilities of governments, sports and sports-related organizations, and individuals. The Code calls for giving fair play the highest priority by all those who, directly or indirectly, influence and promote sporting experiences for children and young people. (JDD)

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RECOMMENDATION No. R (92) 14

OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES

ON THE CODE OF SPORTS ETHICS

(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 24 September 1992 at the 480th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)

ED 364 515

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.*b* of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage and of facilitating their economic and social progress;

Wishing to see sport develop in the spirit of the European Sports Charter,

Aware of the pressures which modern society, marked amongst other things by the race for success, the need for stars, and the exposure to the mass-media, brings to bear on sport,

Convinced of the need to provide sportsmen and women with a system of values which will enable them to make responsible choices when facing such pressures,

Convinced that incorporating the principles set out in the Code of Sports Ethics in physical education curricula and in the policies of sports organisations will favourably influence the attitudes of athletes and the general public to sport,

Wishing to complement Recommendation No. R (92) 13 on the European Sports Charter with a statement of ethical principles in sport,

Considering that the European Ministers responsible for Sport, meeting in Rhodes for their 7th Conference (1992), adopted such a statement of principles under the title of the Code of Sports Ethics,

Recommends that the governments of member states:

— give their full support to the Code of Sports Ethics as set out in the appendix to this recommendation;

— disseminate the code in their own language(s) amongst their sports organisations and to promote its dissemination amongst all the appropriate target groups, especially those working with young people;

— encourage the authorities responsible for school and out-of-school education to include the principles set out in the code in physical education curricula;

— encourage regional, national and international sports organisations in developing their own campaigns to strengthen sports ethics to take account of the principles set out in the code,

Instructs the Secretary General to transmit this recommendation to:

— the governments of states party to the European Cultural Convention not member states of the Council of Europe;

— to international organisations and to international sports organisations.

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Appendix to Recommendation No. R (92) 14

Code of Sports Ethics

Fair play — the winning way
(Qui joue loyalement est toujours gagnant)

Aims

The basic principle of the Code of Sports Ethics is that ethical considerations leading to fair play are integral, and not optional elements, of all sports activity, sports policy and management, and apply to all levels of ability and commitment, including recreational as well as competitive sport.

The code provides a sound ethical framework to combat the pressures in modern-day society which appear to be undermining the traditional foundations of sport — foundations built on fair play and sportsmanship, and on the voluntary movement.

The primary concern and focus is fair play for children and young people, in the recognition that children and young people of today are the adult participants and sporting stars of tomorrow. The code is also aimed at the institutions and adults who have a direct or indirect influence on young people's involvement and participation in sport.

The code embraces the concepts of the right of children and young people to participate and enjoy their involvement in sport, and the responsibilities of the institutions and adults to promote fair play and to ensure that these rights are respected.

Defining fair play

Fair play is defined as much more than playing within the rules. It incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always playing within the right spirit. Fair play is defined as a way of thinking, not just a way of behaving. It incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of cheating, gamesmanship, doping, violence (both physical and verbal), exploitation, unequal opportunities, excessive commercialisation and corruption.

Fair play is a positive concept. Sport is a cultural activity which, practised fairly, enriches society and the friendship between nations. Sport is also recognised as an activity which, played fairly, offers the individual the opportunity of self-knowledge, self-expression and fulfilment; personal achievement, skill acquisition and demonstration of ability; social interaction, enjoyment, good health and well-being. Sport promotes involvement and responsiblity in society with its wide range of clubs and leaders working voluntarily. In addition, responsible involvement in some activities can help to promote sensitivity to the environment.

Responsibility for fair play

Involvement and participation in sport among children and young people takes place within a wider social environment. The potential benefits to society and to the individual from sport will only be maximised where fair play is moved from the peripheral position it currently occupies to centre stage. Fair play must be given the highest priority by all those who, directly or indirectly, influence and promote sporting experiences for children and young people. These include:

— governments: at all levels, and including agencies working with governments. Those involved in formal education have a particular responsibility.

— sports and sports-related organisations — including sports federations and governing bodies, physical education associations, coaching agencies and institutes, medical and pharmacological professions and the media. The commercial sector, including sports goods manufacturers and retailers and marketing agencies, also has a responsibility to contribute to the promotion of fair play.

— individuals, including parents, teachers, coaches, referees, officials, sports leaders, administrators, journalists, doctors and pharmacists, role models who have achieved levels of sporting excellence and those who work on a voluntary or professional basis. Individuals may also have responsibilities in their capacity as spectators.

Each of these institutions and individuals has a responsibility and a role to play. This Code of Sports Ethics is addressed to them. It will only be effective if all involved in sport are prepared to take on the responsibilities identified in the code.

Governments

Governments have the following responsibilities:

— to encourage the adoption of high ethical standards in all aspects of society within which sport operates.

— to stimulate and support those organisations and individuals who have demonstrated sound ethical principles in their work with sport.

— to encourage the education profession to include the promotion of sport and fair play as a central part of the physical education curriculum.

— to support all initiatives aimed at promoting fair play in sport, particularly amongst the young, and to encourage institutions to make fair play a central priority in their work.

— to encourage research both nationally and internationally which would improve our understanding of the complex issues surrounding young people's involvement in sport and which identifies the extent of poor behaviour and the opportunities for promoting fair play.

Sports and sports-related organisations

Sports and sports related organisations have the following responsibilities:

In setting a proper context for fair play

— to publish clear guidelines on what to is considered to be ethical or unethical behaviour and ensure that, at all levels of participation and involvement, consistent and appropriate incentives and/or sanctions are applied.

— to ensure that all decisions are made in accordance with a code of ethics for their sport which reflects the European code.

— to raise the awareness of fair play within their sphere of influence through the use of campaigns, awards, educational material and training opportunities. They must also monitor and evaluate the impact of such initiatives.

— to establish systems which reward fair play and personal levels of achievement in addition to competitive success.

— to provide help and support to the media to promote good behaviour.

When working with young people

— to ensure that the structure of competition acknowledges the special requirements of the young and growing child and provides the opportunity for graded levels of involvement from the recreational to the highly competitive.

— to support the modification of rules to meet the special needs of the very young and immature, and to put the emphasis on fair play rather than competitive success.

— to ensure that safeguards are in place to prevent the exploitation of children, particularly those who demonstrate precocious ability.

— to ensure that all those within or associated with the organisation who have a responsibility for children and young people are qualified at an appropriate level to manage, train, educate and coach them, and in particular that they understand the biological and psychological changes associated with the development of the child.

Individuals

Individuals have the following responsibilities:

Personal behaviour

— to behave in a way which sets a good example and presents a positive role model for children and young people; not in any way to reward, to demonstrate personally, nor to condone in others unfair play, and to take appropriate sanctions against this type of behaviour.

— to ensure that their own level of training and qualification is appropriate to the needs of the child as they move through different stages of sporting commitment.

When working with young people

— to put as a first priority the health, safety and welfare of the child or young athlete and to ensure that such considerations come before vicarious achievement, or the reputation of the school, club, coach or parent.

— to provide a sporting experience for children that encourages a life-long commitment to health related physical activity.

— to avoid treating children as simply small adults but to be aware of the physical and psychological changes that occur during maturation and how these affect sporting performance.

— to avoid placing on a child expectations unrelated to his or her capacity to meet them.

— to make the enjoyment of the participant a priority and never to place undue pressure which impinges on the rights of the child to choose to participate.

— to take as much interest in the less talented as in the talented and to emphasise and reward personal levels of achievement and skill acquisition in addition to more overt competitive success.

— to encourage young children to devise their own games with their own rules, to take on the roles of coach, official and referee in addition to participant, to devise their own incentives and sanctions for fair or unfair play, and to take personal responsibility for their actions.

— to provide the child and young person and child's family with as much information as possible to ensure awareness of the potential risks and attractions of reaching levels of high performance.

Summary

Fair play is an essential part of successful promotion, development and involvement in sport. Through fair play, the individual, the sports organisations and society as a whole all win. We all have a responsibility to promote Fair play — the winning way.